



ALONE TOGETHER: DESIGNING OUT SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS IN STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

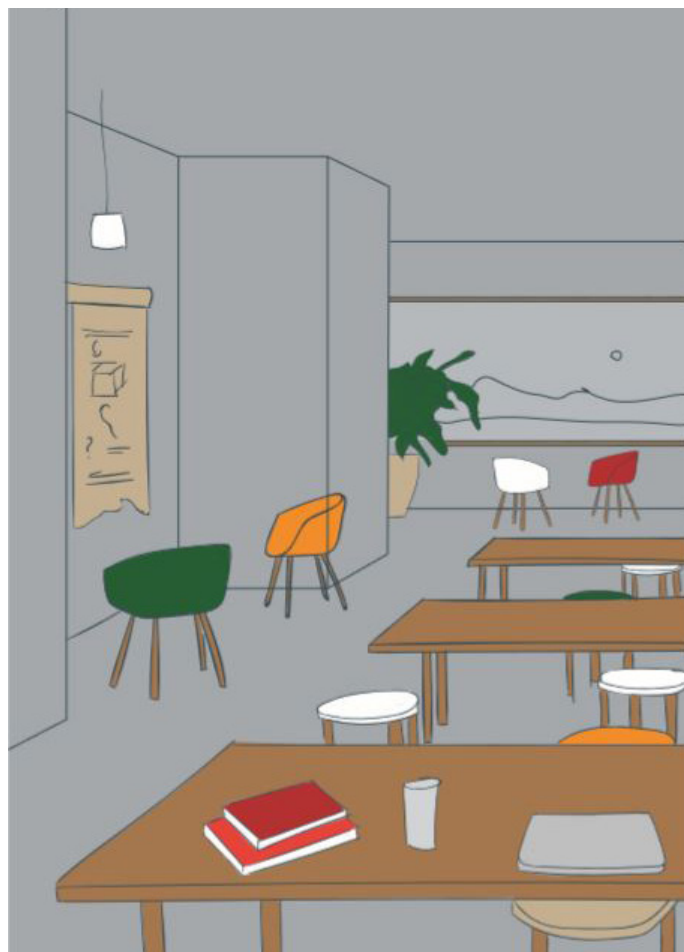
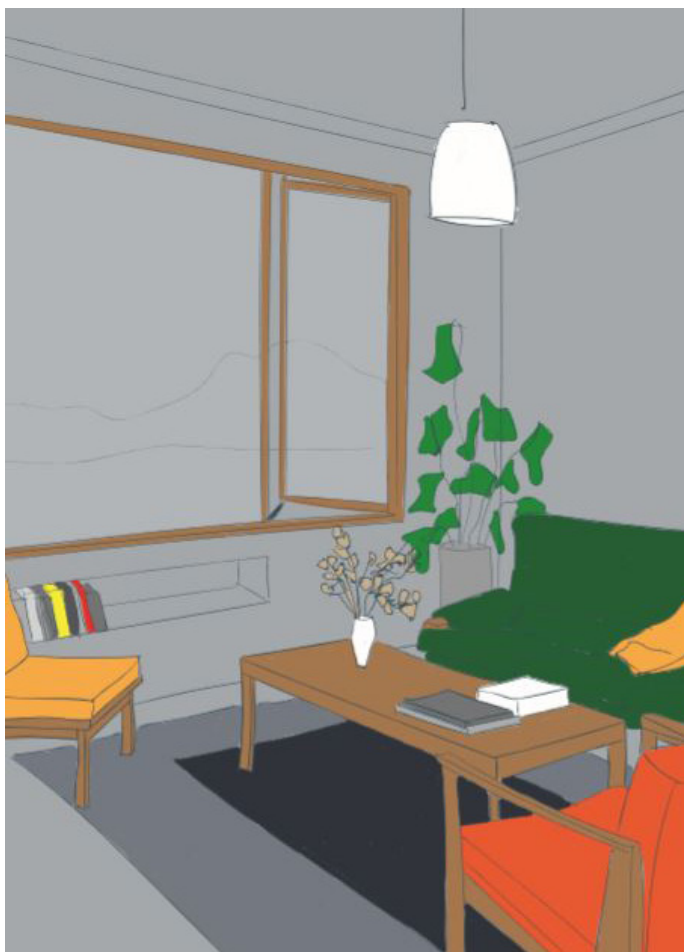




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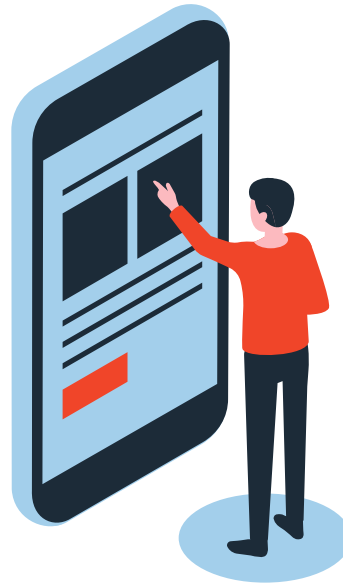




INTRODUCTION

WSP partnered with the Victoria University Wellington School of Architecture to co-fund a summer research paper. Its purpose was to investigate potential architectural applications within student halls of residence to alleviate experiences of social isolation and loneliness. The design framework is presented according to differing spaces within a hall of residence as well as sensual elements including light, colour, acoustics, aroma, tactility, space, biophilia and diversity. Addressed appropriately, each sensual element is considered to alleviate experiences of social isolation and loneliness through supporting and fostering both connection to self, to others, and to space or place.

Alone Together is a research report produced as a Summer Research Scholarship Programme partnership between WSP and Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). Anya Seth was the primary investigator, with Dr Jan Smitheram as VUW Supervisor. The paper was also supervised by Carinna Feaunati, WSP Architectural Graduate.



SPACES TO BE LOCATED

Are central to supporting residents' connection to the surrounding environment, mediating the boundaries between residents' educational and social life.

This can include:

- A location that is embedded into the surrounding area in relation to educational and social facilities.
- Establishing strong connections to the surrounding areas through transport routes and spaces. Establishing spaces and amenities to allow residents opportunity to integrate with the wider community.

SPACES TO ENTER

These are central to supporting residents' initial and continual connection to both others and the surrounding environment. Treatments may include:

- Access to natural daylight and artificial light to provide a sense of arrival and safety.
- A variation of colour on finishings, fittings and furniture to signal the identity of the hall of residence.
- Space planning, orientation and materiality to distinguish the entry from undesirable surrounding acoustics and aromas.
- A variety of tactile finishings, fittings and furniture that support the identity of the hall of residence and stimulate interest and comfort.
- Large open space that is receptive to a variety of users, as well as locating relevant amenities nearby.
- A connection to internal and external biophilia to create a sense of arrival and comfort to the surrounding environment.
- Accessibility, security and practicality of space to a variety of users and times.



SPACES TO SOCIALISE

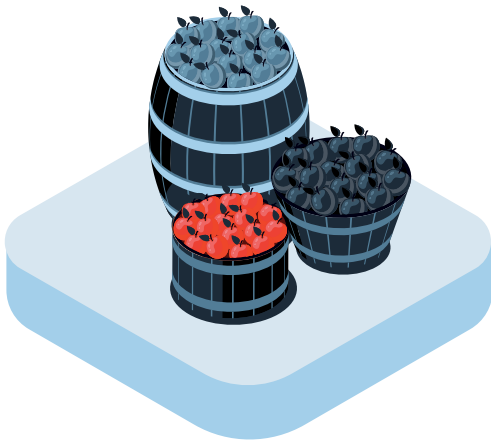
These are central to supporting residents' connection to others and the hall of residence community. This can be addressed through incorporating sensual elements including:

- Access to natural daylight and artificial light appropriate to a variety of social and intimate connection.
- A variation of colour on finishings, fittings and furniture to signal the space as social, vibrant and diverse.
- Space planning and access to the external environment to create acoustic and aroma comfort.
- A variety of tactile finishings, fittings and furniture that stimulate interest, comfort and appeal.
- Generous open space that is flexible to social and intimate connections and functions, whereby proximity encourages differing levels of interaction.
- The connection to internal and external biophilia, and/or natural materiality and form.
- Accessibility, adaptability and security of space that is reflective of the diversity of users.

SPACES TO CIRCULATE

Are central to supporting residents' fortuitous connection to others, initiating and continuing the likelihood of establishing social relations.

- Design elements may include:
- Access to natural daylight and artificial light to support spaces of rest, wayfinding and security.
- A variation of colour on finishings and fittings to signal differing spaces of pause and movement.
- Space planning and access to the external environment to separate differing spaces of acoustics and aromas.
- A variety of tactile finishings, fittings and furniture to signal differing spaces of pause and movement.
- A variation in width and form of space to signal spaces of pause and movement, as well as an arrangement to support ease of building legibility.
- Directing views towards external biophilia in moments of pause, and utilising internal biophilia to signal spaces of destination.
- Accessibility, security and privacy of residents using the circulation spaces, or adjacent spaces.



SPACES TO EAT

Are central to supporting and maintaining residents' connection to others. These can be supported by:

- Providing access to natural daylight in response to when users will predominantly be in this space and artificial light as focal points for individual table arrangements.
- A variation of colour on finishings, fittings and furniture to signal the space as social, diverse and comfortable.
- Space planning and access to the external environment to separate spaces of undesirable acoustics and aromas.
- A variety of tactile finishings, fittings and furniture to stimulate interest, comfort and appeal.
- Open plan space and arrangements that are flexible to social and intimate connections and functions. These should provide opportunity for individuals to eat alone, with others, or with a group. Provide views to external natural or built environment to stimulate a sense of other.
- Provide accessible, adaptive space and arrangements that are reflective of the diversity of its users.

SPACES TO STUDY

Are key to supporting and maintaining residents' connection to oneself and others in relation to education. Design elements can include:

- Access to natural daylight while shading from direct sunlight, along with consideration of artificial lighting to stimulate alert and focus.
- A minimal variation of related colour and materials on finishings, fittings and furniture to signal the space as neutral and comforting.
- Space planning, materiality and access to the external environment to minimise distraction from undesirable acoustics and aromas.
- A minimal variation of tactile finishings, fittings and furniture that allow focus, comfort and support the mental and physical expression of individuals thoughts.
- A range of open plan and smaller spaces that support study by the individual, with others or with a large group, while remaining independent of one another.
- Surrounding views to external or internal biophilia in locations and ways that support learning, but don't demand attention.
- Accessibility, practicality and ability for individuals to express diversity of methods of learning.



SPACES TO SLEEP

Are central to supporting and maintaining residents' connection to themselves, intimate connections to others and to their unique environment.

- This connection may be facilitated through:
- Maximum access to natural daylight, and artificial lighting and/or amenities appropriate to differing spaces within a room.
- A minimal variation of colour and materials on finishings, fittings and furniture to signal the space as neutral, comforting and able to be receptive of an individual's identity.
- Space planning, materiality and access to the external environment to minimise the transfer of undesirable acoustics and aromas, particularly between surrounding spaces to sleep and bathe.
- A minimal variation of tactile finishings, fittings and furniture that signal the space as neutral, comforting, adaptable, and receptive to an individual's identity.
- Simple, open plan space to support a variety of potential arrangements desired by an individual. Directing views to external biophilia and utilising materiality that relates to natural biophilia.
- Should be accessible for all users, practical, secure and encourage an individual to express their identity.

SPACES TO BE OUTSIDE

These support and maintain residents' connections to themselves, others, the wider community and the environment.

- Design that facilitates this includes:
- Access to direct natural light with consideration given to when users will predominantly use this space, providing shading and artificial lighting to support intimate and social connections, and safety.
- A variation of related colour and materials on finishings, fittings and furniture aligning to the surrounding environment. This signals the space as social, diverse and comfortable.
- Space planning, materiality and biophilia to distinguish differing spaces of acoustics and aromas.
- A variation of related tactile finishings, fittings and furniture to stimulate alertness, comfort and appeal.
- A range of open plan and smaller spaces and arrangements that are flexible to differing connections and functions. These should encourage interaction with the wider community.
- Maximising the use of external biophilia to separate spaces and direct views towards a desirable focal view or biophilic structure.
- Creating an accessible, practical space that is a pleasure to use at different times of day and in different weather conditions.

